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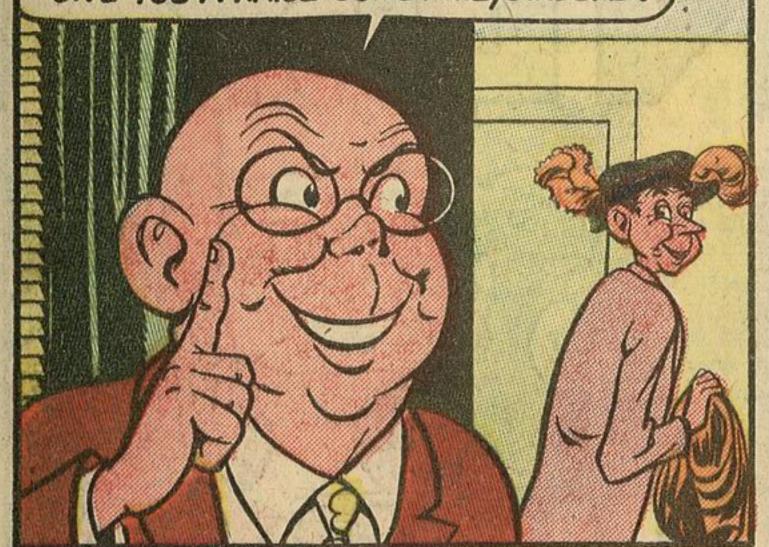
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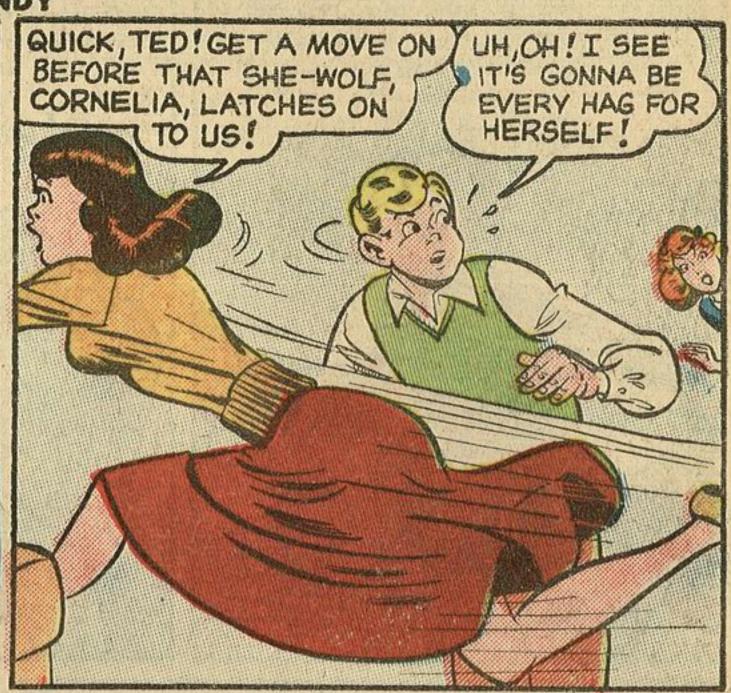
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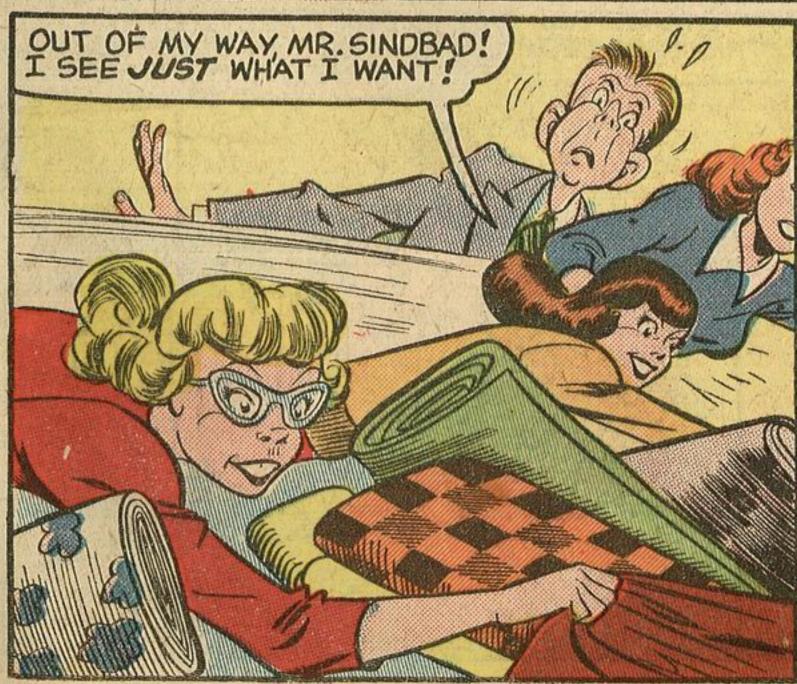
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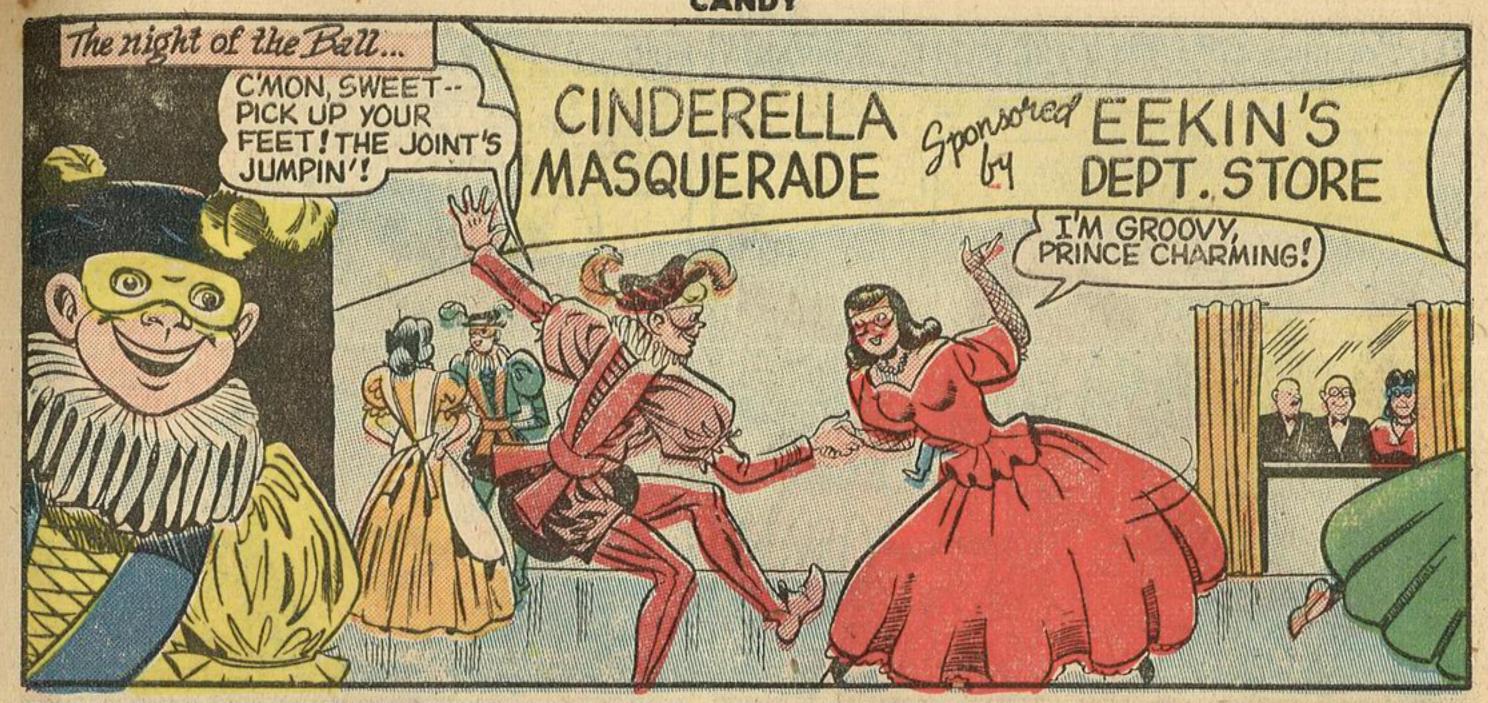






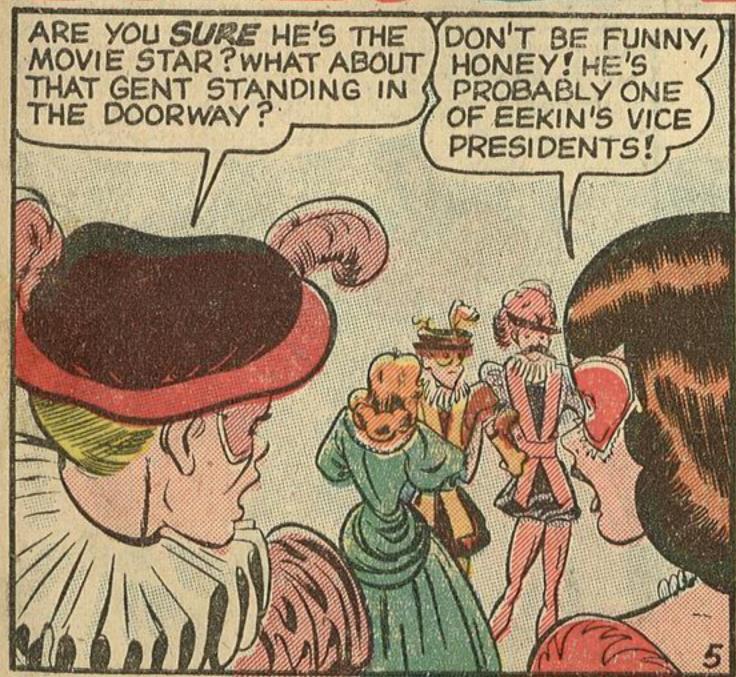


























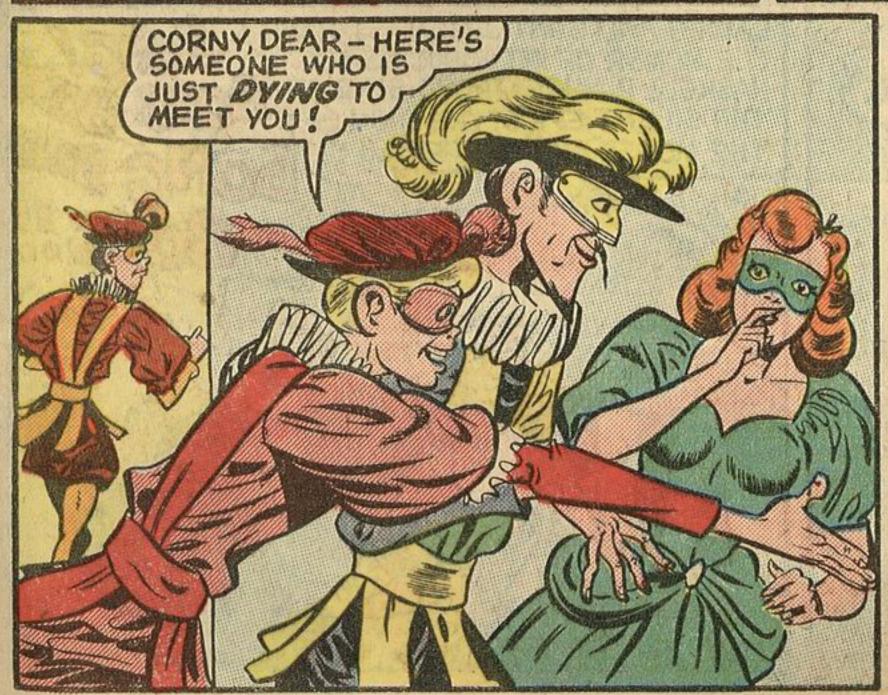
















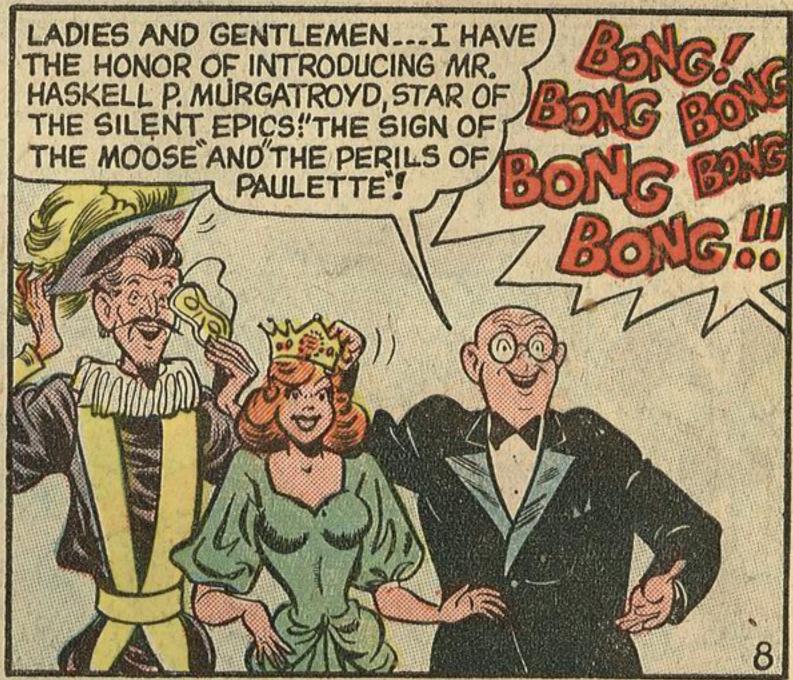








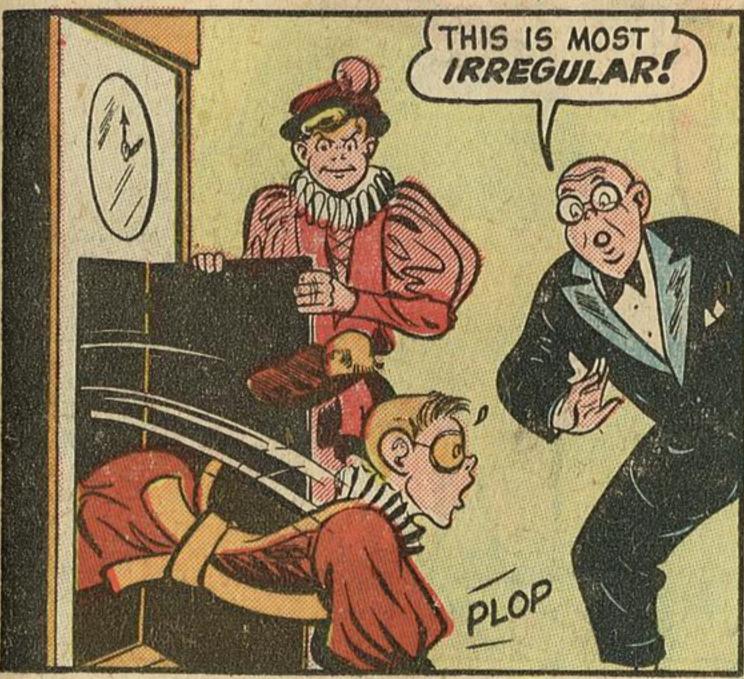


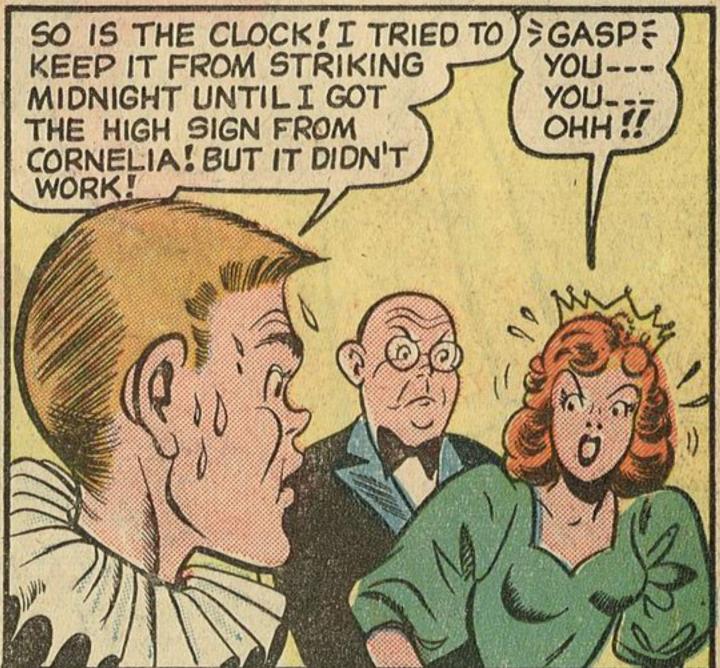




















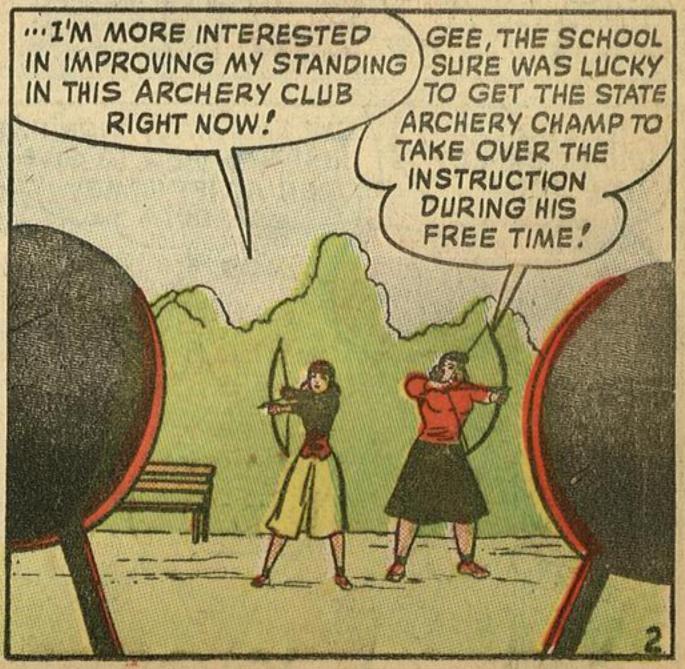










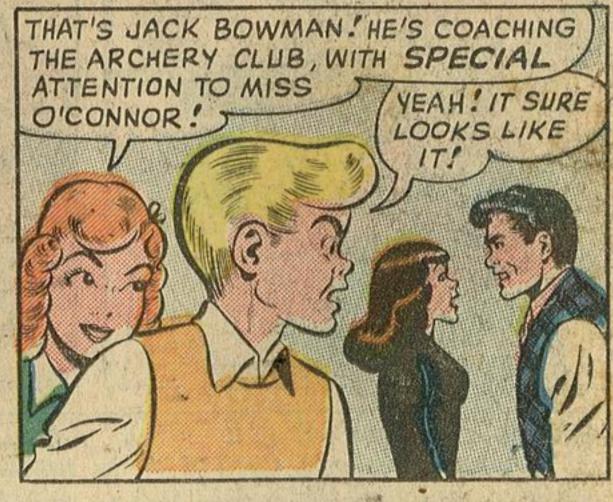












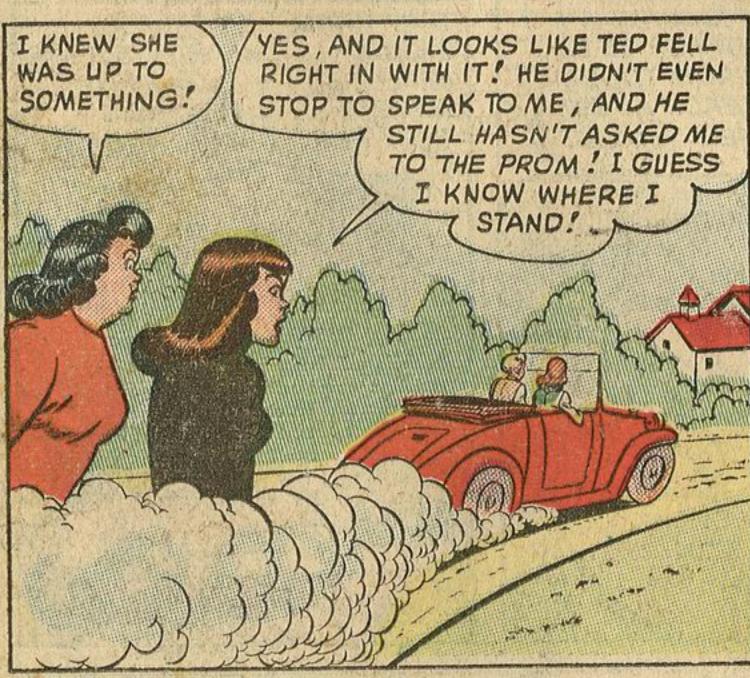










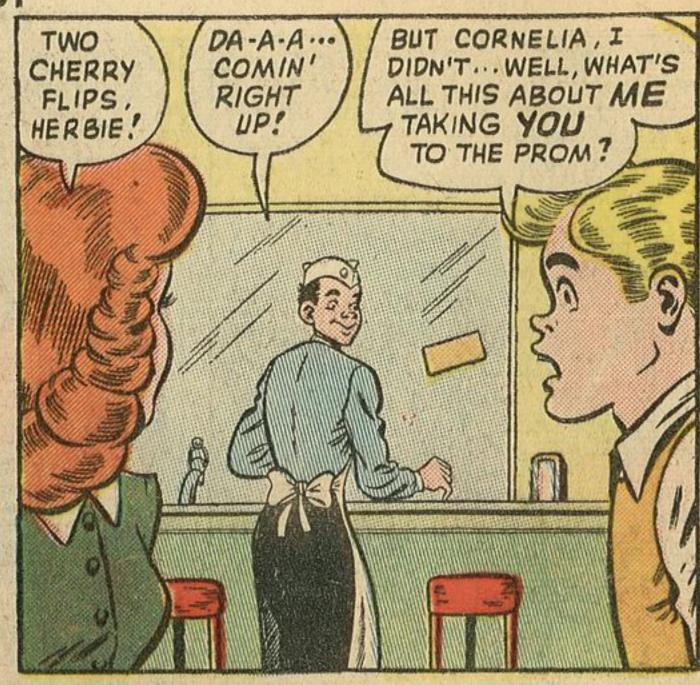










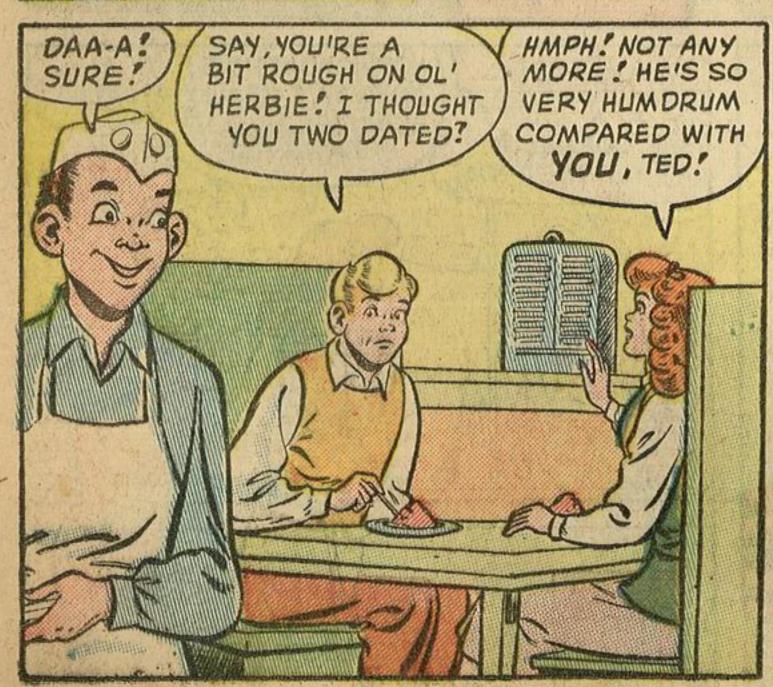






OKAY, OKAY! MAYBE IT'S





































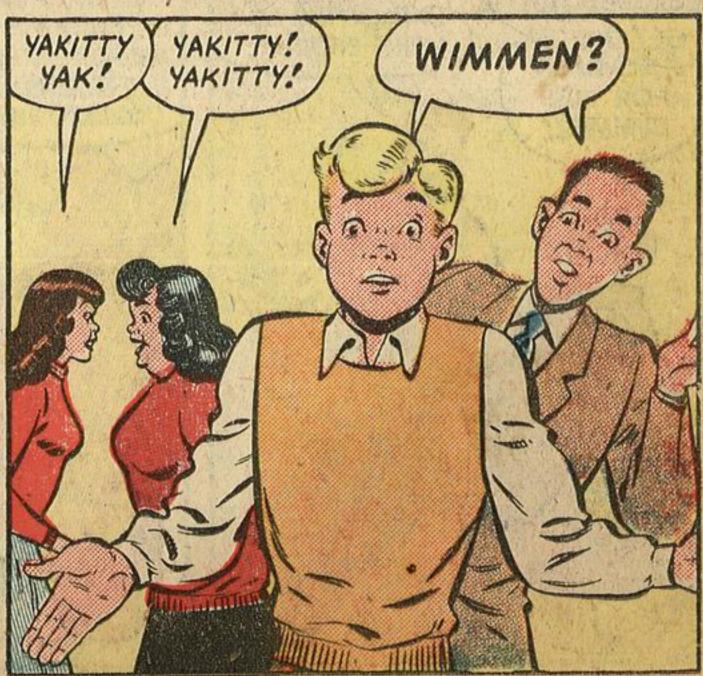






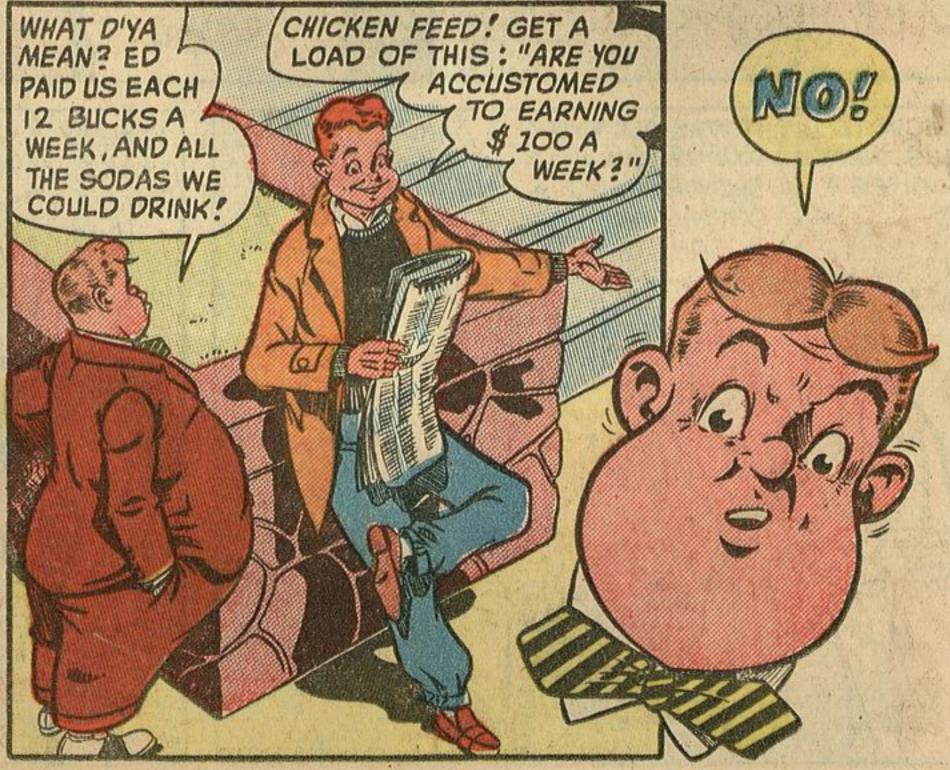






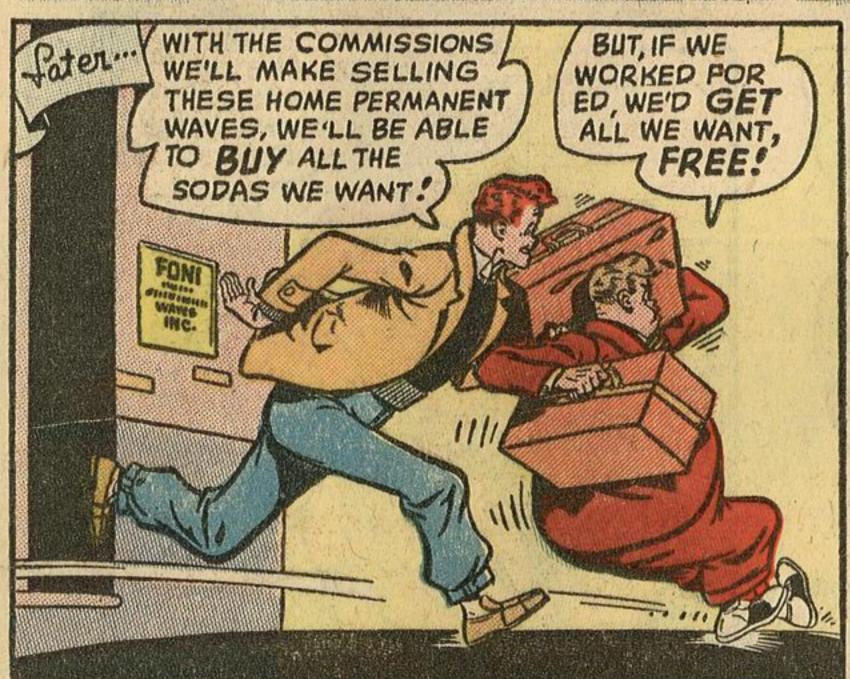




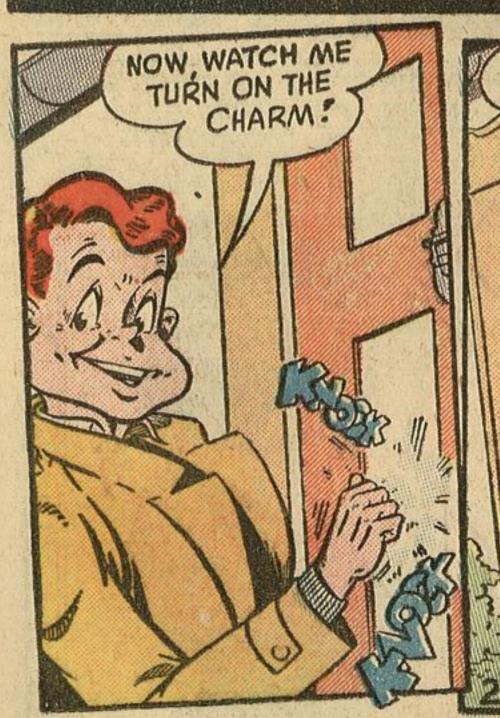






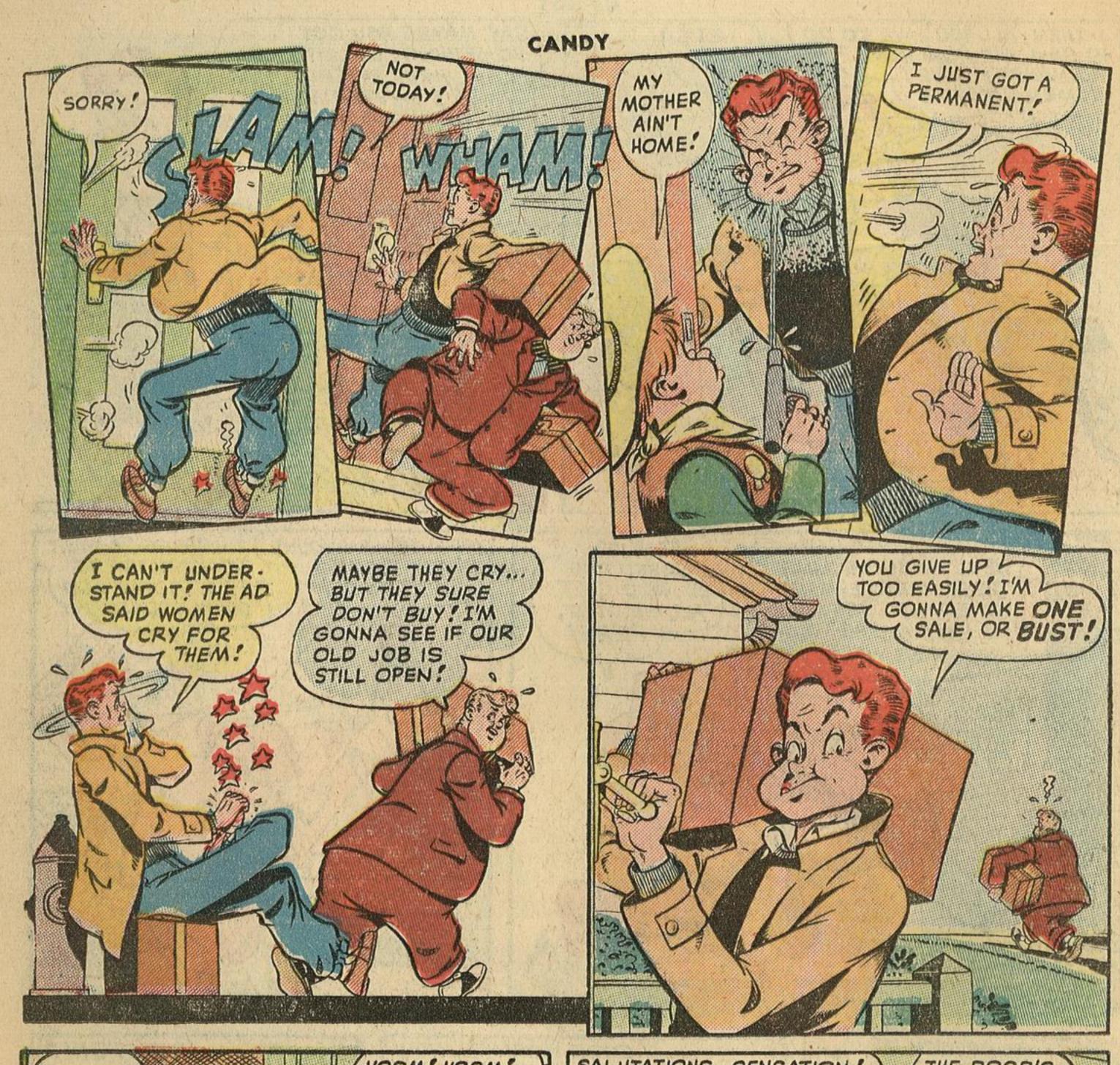






























Surprised PARTIES

CANDY O'CONNOR pushed her half-finished breakfast away and prepared to rise. Her father regarded her quizically from across the table and said, "Lost your appetite, Candy?"

"Sort of," Candy replied. "I have to do so much today that I hardly know where to begin. There's my dress to be pressed . . . my hair needs fixing, and a million other things."

"I hope you haven't made any plans for this evening," Mr. O'Connor said. "The Porters are going to the Gotham Theater with your mother and me. Mr. Porter's the manager of a factory where I get most of my electrical supplies."

"That's super, Daddy," said Candy, "but

I don't see . . . ''

"I'm coming to that," Mr. O'Connor went on. "Mr. Porter is leaving his six-months-old son, Tommy, here this evening. I'm afraid you're elected to serve as baby-sitter while we're gone."

"Oh, no, Daddy," Candy protested. "Not tonight of all times. I can't miss the Spring

Festival Ball!"

"Sorry, Kitten," Mr. O'Connor said with a note of finality in his voice, "but business comes first. Besides," he continued, "there will be

plenty of other dances."

"This is THE event of the season," Candy said woefully. "Couldn't you and mother entertain the Porters here at home? Then," she pointed out hopefully, "you wouldn't need a baby-sitter."

"I'm afraid not," her father replied. "I already have the tickets. You'll have to change your plans this once, Candy, for me."

"Very well, Father," Candy said dutifully, "if you insist. But I'll probably be a social outcast; and that she-wolf Cornelia will have every dance with Ted."

"Tell you what," Mr. O'Connor said, relenting a bit, "if you can get some responsible friend to take your place you can go to the dance."

"I don't think that will help much," Candy said uncertainly. "Everyone I know will be going to the dance . . . but, hmm . . . it's worth a try. Maybe Ted knows of someone. . . ."

An hour or so later Candy related her troubles to Ted as they left the O'Connor home. "So you see, Ted," she concluded sadly, "if I can't get a standin for tonight our date is off."

"Gosh," Ted said ruefully, rubbing his head, "that's a rough order, sugar. I can't think of anybody. Even Orville has a date tonight and he's usually the last resort. Climb in the heap," he invited, as he pried open the jalopy's door, "we'll see if any of the gang has an idea."

Candy and Ted maintained a thoughtful silence during the bouncing, rattling ride to the Soda Shop. After parking the car they made their way into the fountain where the majority of their friends were gathered about tables, talking and consuming mountains of syrupy concoctions.

"Lend an ear, characters," Ted greeted them. "We need 2 volunteer baby-sitters for Candy tonight."

"I'd be glad to sit with Candy any time,"
Bill Lovejoy said with a grin. "That's my idea

of combining business with pleasure."

"Not with Candy, you dope," Ted corrected. "We need somebody to take Candy's place as a sitter so she can go to the dance."

"Sorry, Dawson," Bill said, "I have a date

with Cornelia."

"And you better not try to break it, Bill Lovejoy," Cornelia warned, looking up from her sundae, "or you'll really be sorry."

Turning to Candy, who sat down beside her, Trish said, "I wish I could help, Candy, but I just don't know of a soul. Everyone is going to the dance."

"There must be someone who would stay with Tommy," Candy said in desperation. "I simply can't miss the dance."

"Why don't you try the Baby-sitter's Agency?" Trish suggested.

"With what's left of my allowance," Candy said, "I wouldn't be able to hire one for five minutes."

"Come on, Candy," Ted said, rising and starting for the door. "I can scrape enough dough together to pay for a sitter, if they have one."

Candy and Ted headed for the Agency, located in the center of town. It was a short walk to the building, then up a flight of wooden stairs. The two entered a large, bare-looking

CANDY

room with benches along two walls and a counter extending from one wall to the other. An alert young man watched their approach with interest.

"We would like to hire a sitter for this evening," Candy said, as they reached the counter.

"I'm afraid that's impossible," the young man replied. "You have to make an appointment several days in advance. We have so many calls and so few sitters."

"Golly," Candy said, looking with wistful brown eyes at the young man, "if I can't get a sitter to take my place we won't be able to go to the Ball tonight at the Country Club. Can't you suggest something?"

"Er, not at the moment," the young man said, coloring slightly. "Your only possibility is if someone cancels his appointment. I'll be glad to see that you are first on my list."

"You're very kind," Candy said, lowering her gaze. "I just know you'll be able to find us a baby-sitter."

As they gained the street once more, Candy

said to Ted, "Wasn't he nice?"

"Yeah," Ted said unenthusiastically, "too nice. I didn't like the personal interest he took in your problem. I don't think he had his mind on business."

They continued down the street, passing the Hartwick Costume Shop. Ted stopped and pointed toward the window. "It's too bad it isn't a costume ball," he said lightly. "Then you could rent that Indian squaw's outfit and strap little Tommy to your back like a papoose and take him to the dance."

"Don't be idiotic, Ted," Candy said with a frown. "That would mean I could only dance the slow numbers, so as not to wake him up."

While Ted and Candy started back to the car, Trish was holding council at the Soda Shop. "We can't let Candy down," she said seriously to the gathering. "We all know how much she wants to go to the dance. We simply must help her."

"I wish I could think of someone," Cuthbert said thoughtfully. "It seems that all of us put

together could think of something."

"That's it," Trish said excitedly. "All of us can do something. We'll draw lots and each couple will spend an hour at Candy's house to act as baby-sitters. That way, none of us will miss more than an hour of the dance and still everyone will get to go."

It took little or no persuasion on Trish's part get the rest of the crowd to accept her plan. Jood," Trish said finally, "I'll call Candy's

home so she will know about it. Then we can settle the times we are to be sitters."

When Candy reached home her mother met her at the door, saying, "We're ready to leave for Gotham City as soon as the Porters arrive, but I have good news for you: Trish called and said they have made arrangements to take turns at sitting with Tommy. I got a few things from the store and baked a cake so your friends will have refreshments while they are here."

"You're a darling, Mother," Candy said happily, throwing her arms about Mrs. O'Connor. "Now I'll have to hurry to get ready myself."

That evening Candy and Ted danced in silence to the uninspired music of the Country Club Orchestra. "It's funny," Ted said finally, "how much you look forward and plan for a dance and then it doesn't turn out to be any fun at all."

"I was thinking the same thing," Candy said.
"We haven't seen any of our friends here in ages and it's almost eleven o'clock. We'll have to be going soon, to give Trish and Cuthbert time to get back for the last dance . . . let's go now."

When Candy and Ted reached the O'Connor house, all the downstairs lights were blazing brightly and sounds could be heard coming from within. "I hope there's nothing wrong with Tommy," Candy said worriedly. "I believe Trish would have called if there were."

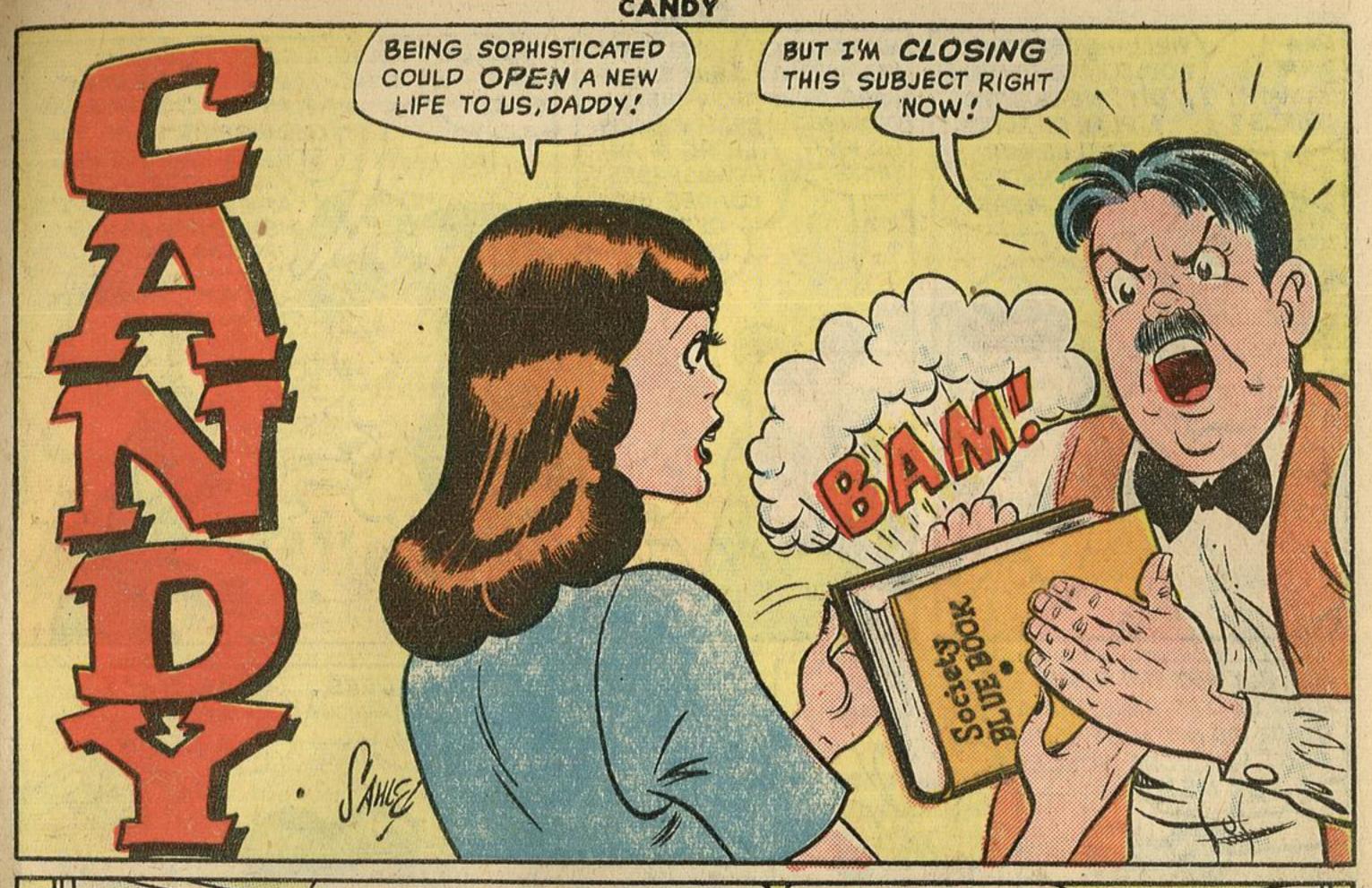
Candy let herself into the living room and gasped. All their friends were there: some dancing to the radio; some on their way for more food, which was piled high on the dining room table; others sitting around and holding an animated conversation over the noise of the radio.

"Welcome home, Candy," Cuthbert called, as he saw her enter. "We all agreed the dance was dull, so instead of coming back after our turns at baby-sitting we decided to hold our own party here . . . some spread your mother fixed for us!"

"We were coming to get you," Trish explained, "but we knew you'd be along in a few minutes. Why not join your party?"

"This is more like it," Ted said to Candy, as they moved into the room. "These unplanned shindigs always turn out best . . . and it seems that when you needed a baby-sitter, pigeon, you really got results."

"I don't know whether it's a compliment to me or my mother's cooking," Candy said, with a puzzled smile.





















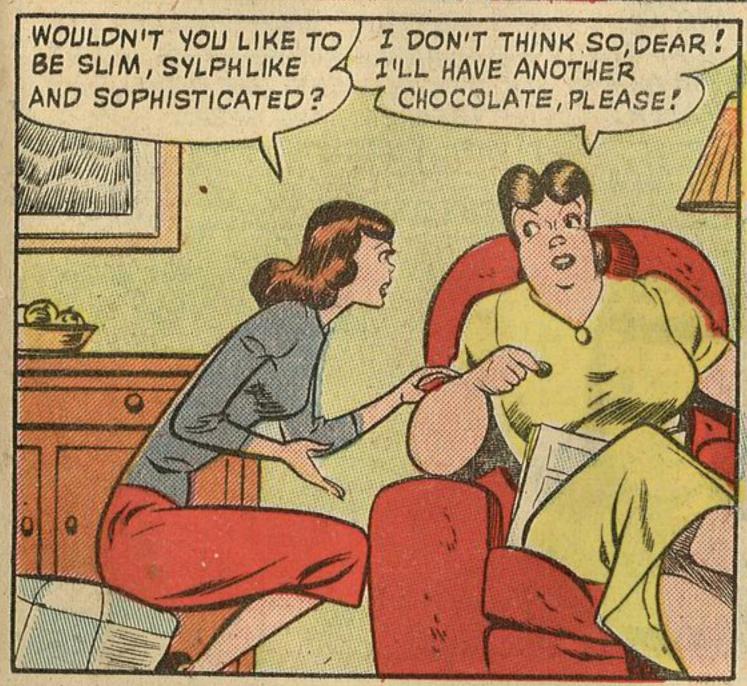


















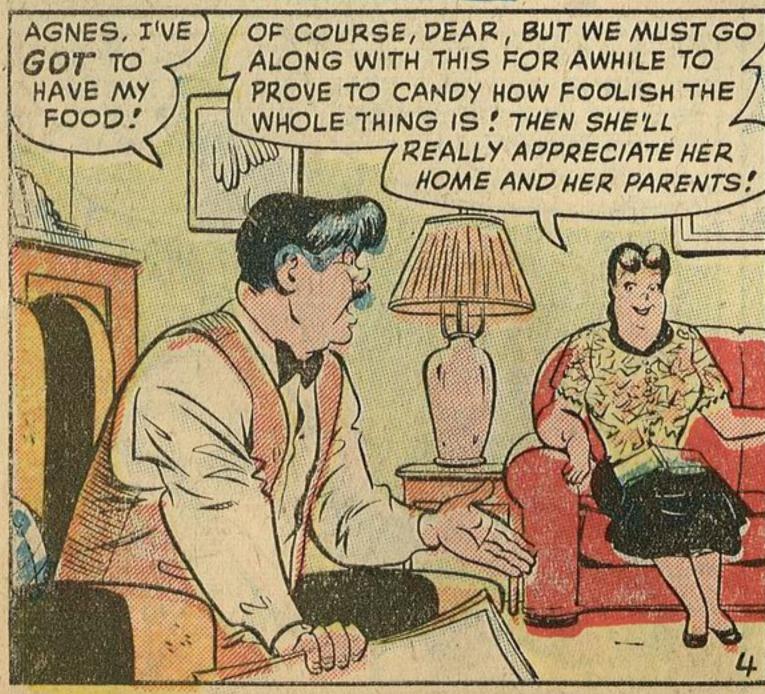




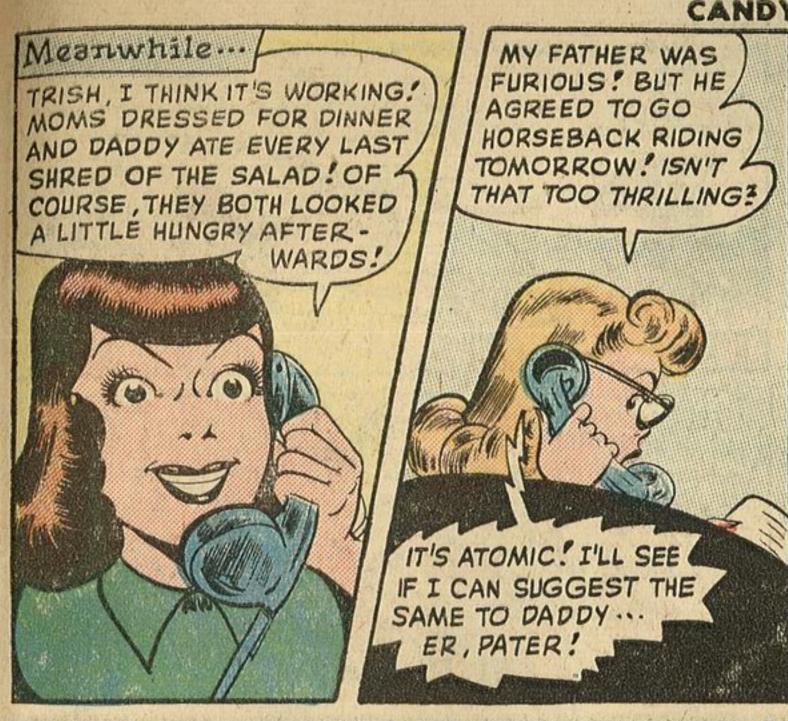






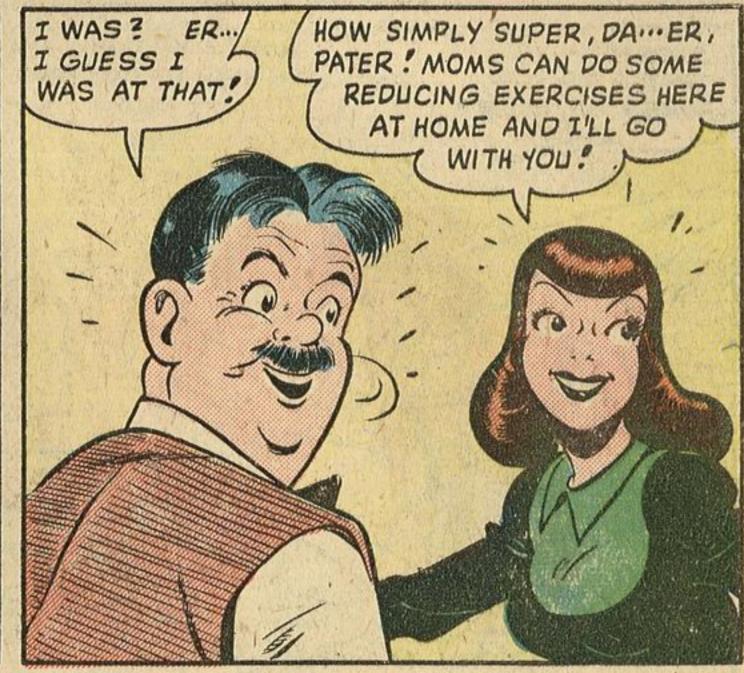










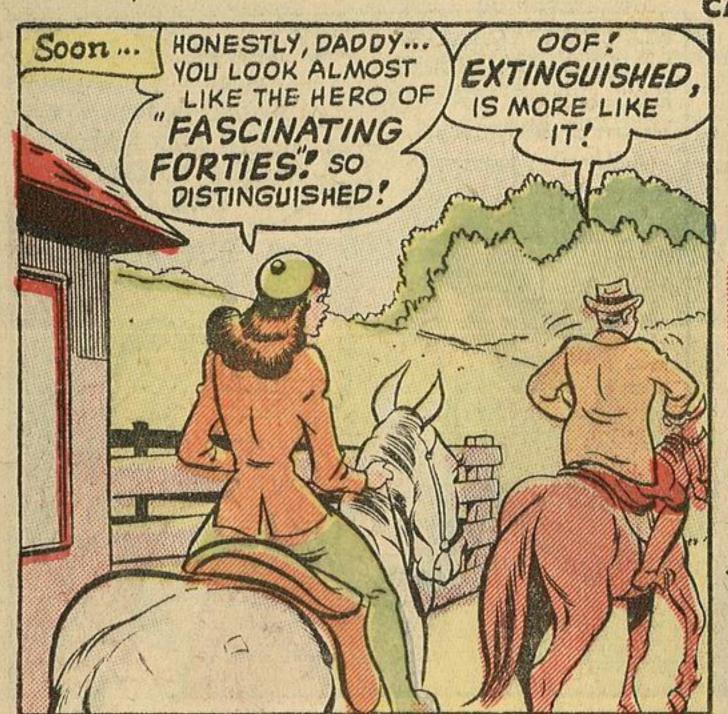


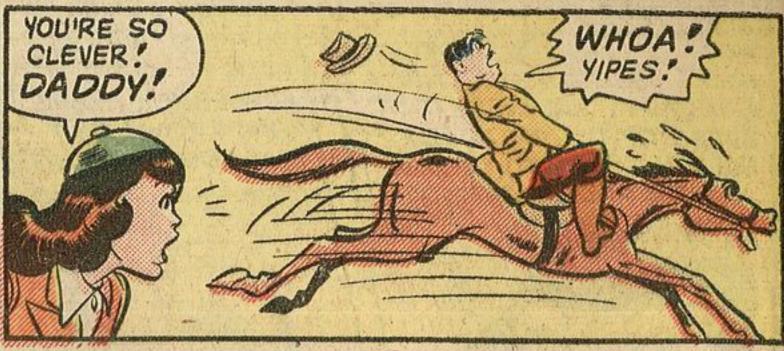




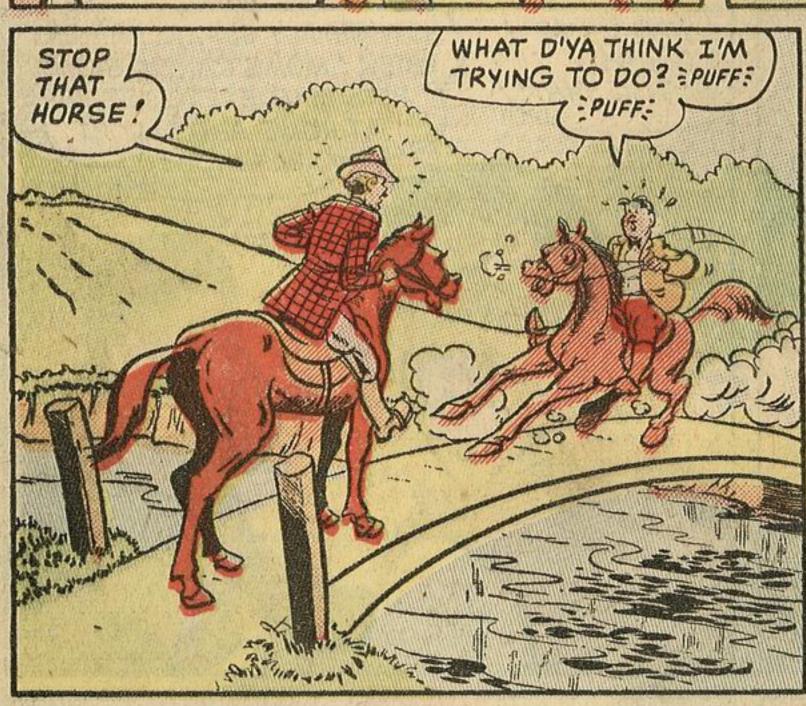


CANDY

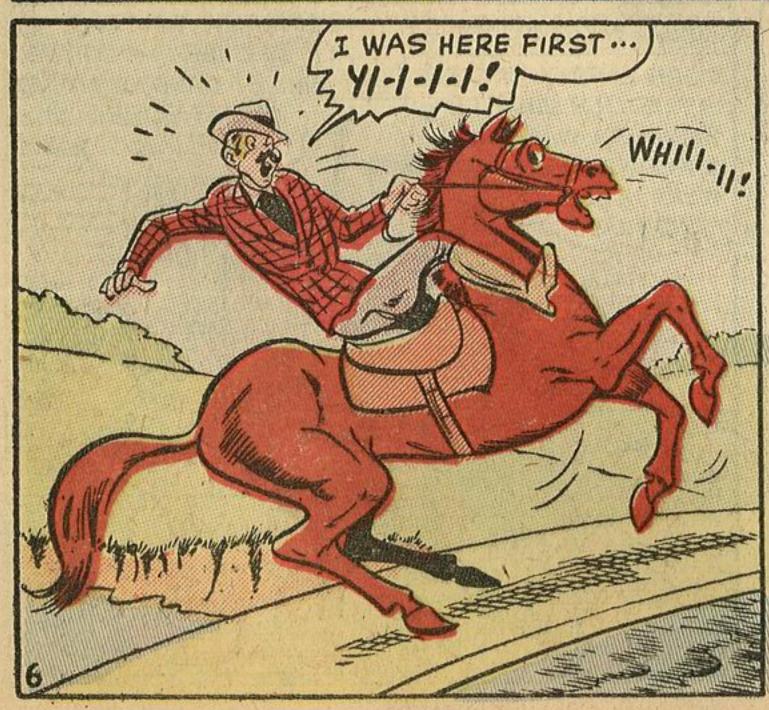


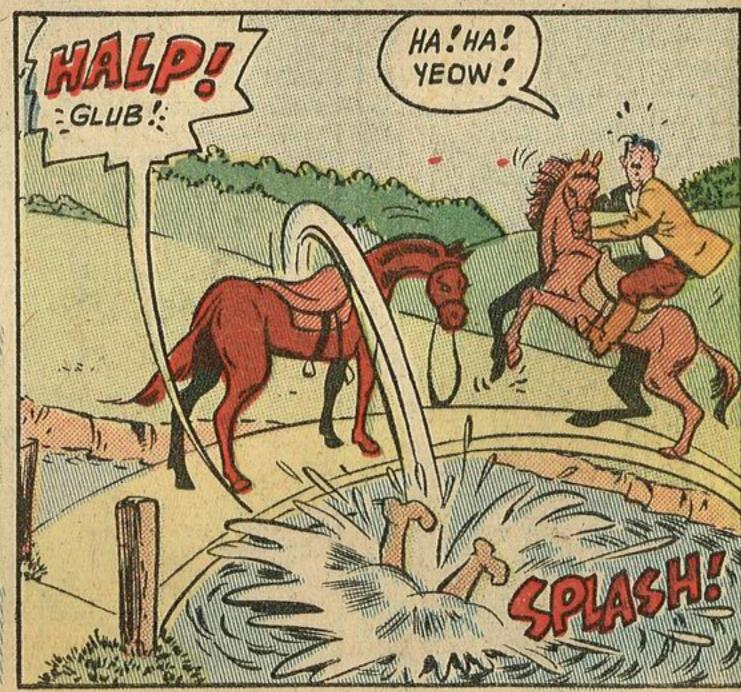




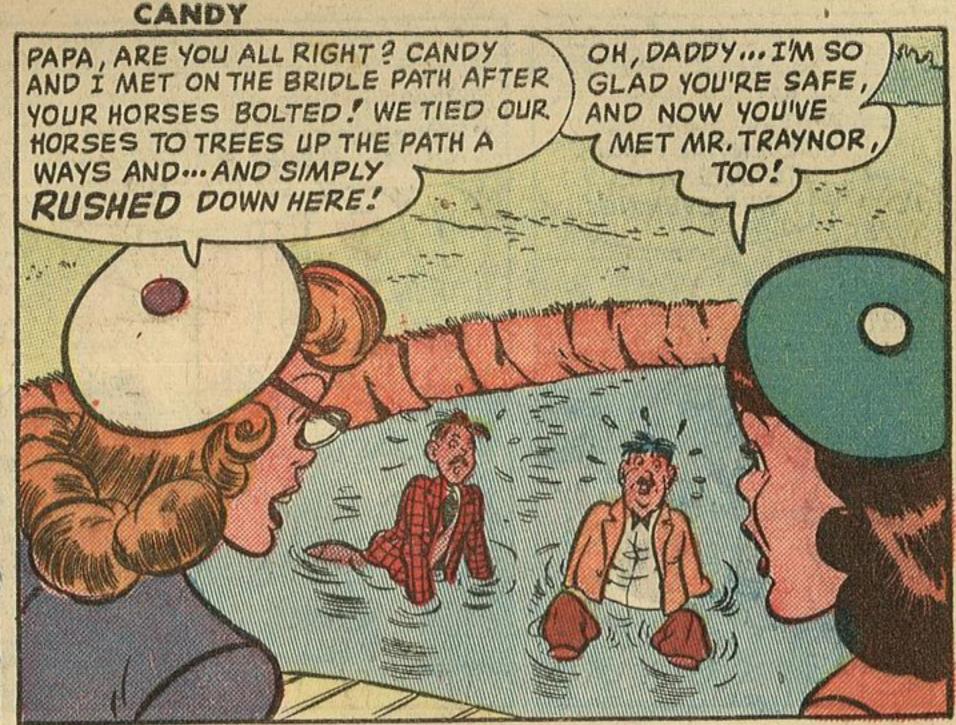


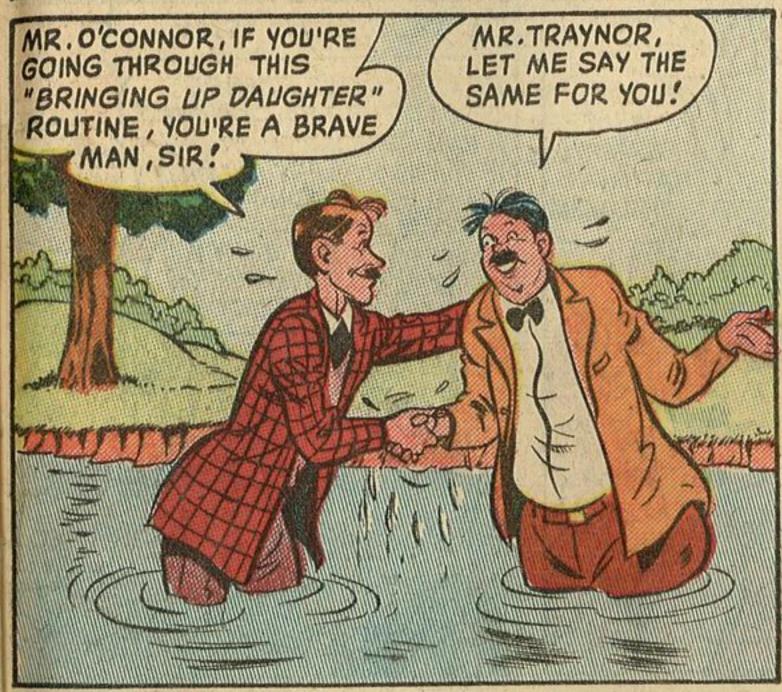






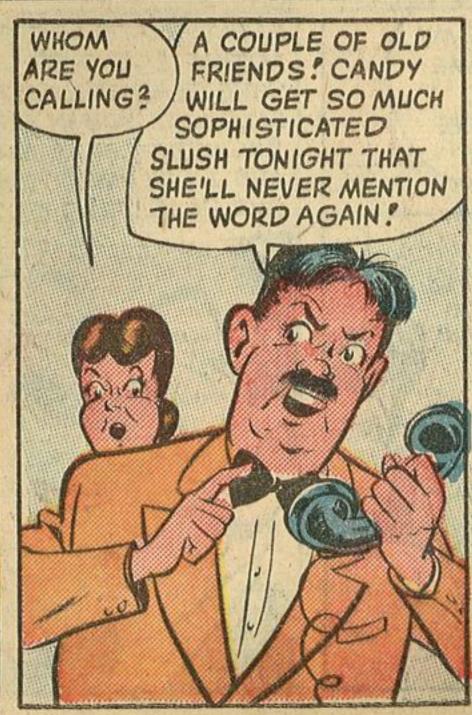


















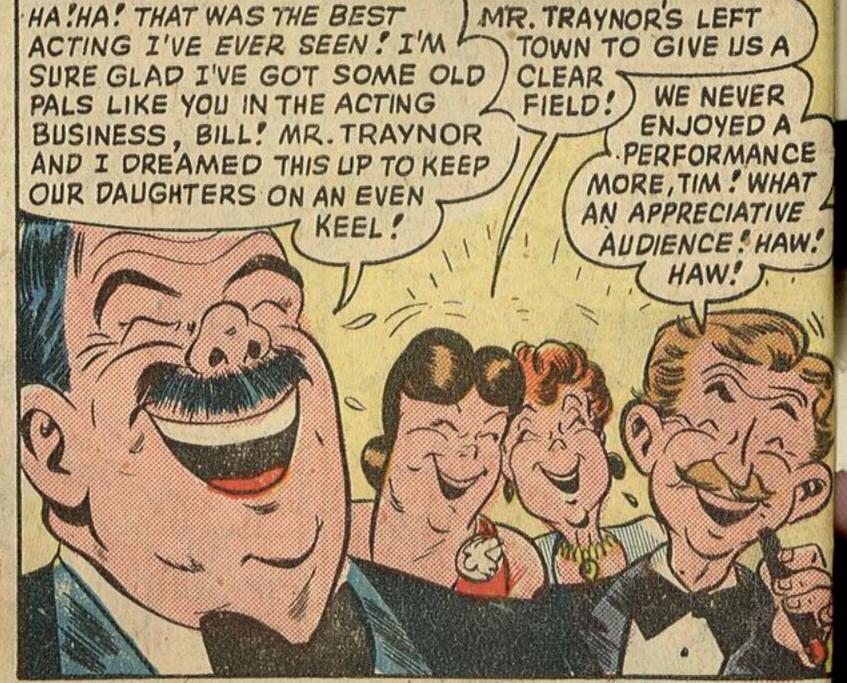




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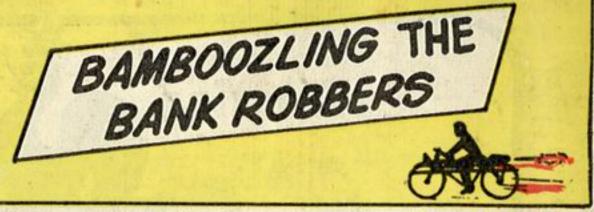
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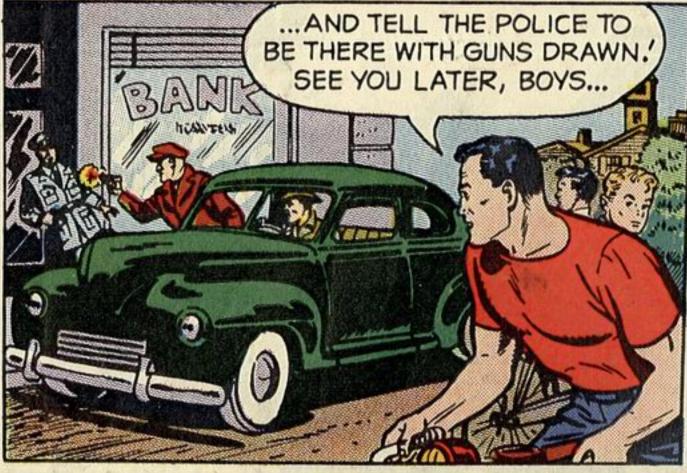
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